the description of him in the *Rosciad* (l. 987) at this period. He is placed in the second rank, next to Garrick, but there is no hint of possible rivalry. Churchill describes him as an actor whose conceptions were superior to his powers of execution, whose action was always forcible but too mechanically calculated, and who in spite of all his defects rose to greatness in occasional scenes. Churchill never erred on the side of praising too much, and his description may be accepted as correct, supported as it is by the fact that the actor eked out his income by giving lessons in elocution. Sheridan solicited a pension for Samuel Johnson from Lord Bute through Wedderbum. The pension, £300 a year, was granted, and shortly afterwards Bute was so favourably impressed with a scheme submitted to him by Sheridan of his *Pronouncing Dictionary* that he bestowed a pension of £200 on him also. Some hasty remarks of Johnson’s on the matter were repeated to Sheridan, who broke off his acquaintance with the doctor in consequence. Sheridan, how­ever, attracted attention chiefly by his enthusiastic advocacy, in public lectures and books, of his scheme of education, in which elocution was to play a principal part. In the case of his son, Richard Brinsley Sheridan, his instruction was certainly not wasted. Sheridan’s indictment of the established system of education was that it did not fit the higher classes for their duties in life, that it was uniform for all and profitable for none; and he urged as a matter of vital national concern that special training should be given for the various professions. Oratory came in as part of the special training of men intended for public affairs, but his main contention was one very familiar now— that more time should be given in schools to the study of the English language. He rode his hobby with great enthusiasm, published an elaborate and eloquent treatise on education, and lectured on the subject in London, Oxford, Cambridge, Edinburgh and other towns. In 1764 he went to live in France, partly for economy, partly for Mrs Sheridan’s health, and partly to study the system of education. His wife died in 1766 and soon after­wards he returned to England. In 1769 he published a matured *Plan of Education for the Young Nobility and Gentry* with a letter to the king, in which he offered to devote the rest of his life to the execution of his theories on condition of receiving a pension equivalent to the sacrifice of his professional income. His offer was not accepted; but Sheridan, still enthusiastic, retired to Bath, and prepared his pronouncing *General Dictionary of the English Language* (2 vols., 1780). After his son’s brilliant success he assisted in the management of Drury Lane, and occasionally acted. His *Life of Swift,* a very entertaining work in spite of its incompleteness as a biography, was written for the 1784 edition of Swift’s works. He died at Margate on the 14th of August 1788.

3. Frances Sheridan (1724-1766), wife of the above and mother of the dramatist, was the daughter of Dr Philip Chamberlaine of Dublin. When only fifteen years of age she wrote a story, *Eugenia and Adelaide,* published after her death in two volumes. She took Sheridan’s part in the so-called Kelly riots, writing some verses and a pamphlet in his defence. This led to her acquaintance, and finally in 1747 to her marriage, with the unpopular manager. It was by Richardson’s advice that she wrote the *Memoirs of Miss Sidney Bidulph. . .* . It was issued anonymously in 1761 with a dedication to Richardson, and had great success, both in England and France. A second part (2 vols.) was published in 1767. Two of her plays were produced in 1763 at Drury Lane, *The Discovery* and *The Dupe.* We have it on the authority of Moore that, when *The Rivals* and *The Duenna* were running at Covent Garden, Garrick revived *The Discovery* at Drury Lane, as a counter-attraction, “ to play the mother off against the son, taking on himself to act the principal part in it.” But the statement, intrinsically absurd, is inaccurate. *The Discovery* was not an old play at the time, but one of Garrick’s stock pieces, and Sir Anthony Branville was one of his favourite characters. It was first produced at Drury Lane in 1763. So far from being jealous of the elder Sheridan, Garrick seems to have been a most useful friend to the family, accepting his wife’s play—which he declared **to** be

“ one of the best comedies he ever read ”—and giving the husband several engagements. *The Dupe* was a failure and was only played once. Her last work was an Oriental tale, *Nourjahad,* written at Blois, where she died on the 26th of September 1766. Her third play, *A Journey to Bath,* was refused by Garrick, and R. B. Sheridan made some use of it in *The Rivals.*

4. Richard brinsley Butler Sheridan (1751-1816), third son of Thomas and Frances Sheridan, was born in Dublin on the 30th of October 1751. There is a story, discredited by Mr Fraser Rae, that Mrs Sheridan on placing her sons with their first school- master, Samuel Whyte, said that she had been the only instructor of her children hitherto, and that they would exercise the school­master in the quality of patience, “ for two such impenetrable dunces she had never met with.” One of the children thus humorously described was Richard Brinsley, then aged seven. At the age of eleven he was sent to Harrow school. Sheridan was extremely popular at school, winning somehow, Dr Parr con­fesses, “ the esteem and even admiration of all his schoolfellows ”; and he acquired, according to the same authority, more learning than he is usually given credit for. He left Harrow at the age of seventeen, and was placed under the care of a tutor. He was also trained by his father daily in elocution, and put through a course of English reading. He had fencing and riding lessons at Angelo’s.

After leaving Harrow he kept up **a** correspondence with a school friend who had gone to Oxford. With this youth, N. B. Halhed, he concocted various literary plans, and between them they actually executed and published (1771) metrical transla­tions of Aristaenetus. In conjunction with Halhed he wrote a farce entitled *Jupiter,* which was refused by both Garrick and Foote and remained in MS., but is of interest as containing the same device of a rehearsal which was afterwards worked out with such brilliant effect in *The Critic.* Some of the dialogue is very much in Sheridan’s mature manner. Extracts given from papers written in the seven years between his leaving Harrow and the appearance of *The Rivals*—sketches of unfinished plays, poems, political letters and pamphlets—show that he was far from idle. The removal of the family to Bath in 1770-1771 led to an acquaintance with the daughters of the composer Thomas Linley. The eldest daughter, Elizabeth Ann (b. 1754), a girl of sixteen, the *prima donna* of her father’s concerts, was exceed­ingly beautiful,@@1 and had many suitors, among them Sheridan, N. B. Halhed and a certain Major Mathews. To protect her from this man’s persecutions, Sheridan, who seems to have acted at first only as a confidential friend, carried out the romantic plan of escorting Miss Linley, in March 1772, to a nunnery in France. Sheridan returned and fought two duels with Mathews, which made a considerable sensation at the time. The pair had gone through the ceremony of marriage in the course of their flight, but Sheridan kept the marriage secret, and was sternly denied access to Miss Linley by her father, who did not consider him an eligible suitor. Sheridan was sent to Waltham Abbey, in Essex, to continue his studies, especially in mathematics. He was entered at the Middle Temple on the 6th of April 1773, and a week later he was openly married to Miss Linley.

His daring start in life after this happy marriage showed a confidence in bis genius which was justified by its success. Although he had no income, and no capital beyond a few thousand pounds brought by his wife, he took a house in Orchard Street, Portman Square, furnished it “ in the most costly style,” and proceeded to return on something like an equal footing the hospitalities of the fashionable world. His first comedy, *The Rivals,* was produced at Covent Garden on the 17th January 1775. It is said to have been not so favourably received on its first night, owing to its length and to the bad playing of the part of Sir Lucius O’Trigger. But the defects were remedied before the second performance, which was deferred to the 28th of the month, and the piece at once took that place on the stage which it has never lost. His second piece, *St* *Patrick’s Day, or the Scheming Lieutenant,* a lively farce, was written for the benefit

@@@1 Her portrait, by Gainsborough, one of the best examples of the artist’s work, hangs at Knole, Sevenoaks, Kent.